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SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PREPARATION OF PLANS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 28 January 1963, at 3.20 p.m.

CONTENTS

Plans for the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 1775 (XVII); ST/SG/AC.4/L.1-3) (continued)

Establishment of a Sub-Committee

PRESENT:

Chairman:	Mrs. TREE	United States of America
Rapporteur:	Mr. DEMETROPOULOS	Greece
Members:	Mr. GARCIA DEL SOLAR	Argentina
	Mr. BARTON	Canada
	Mr. WIJEGOONAWARDENA	Ceylon
	Mr. BAYONA	Colombia
	Mr. VOLIO JIMENEZ	Costa Rica
	Mr. JATIVA	Ecuador
	Mr. BOUQUIN	France
	Mr. SCOLAMIERO	Italy
	Mr. SAWAI	Japan
	Mr. RIFA'I	Jordan
	Mr. TROARE	Mali
	Mr. LUQMAN	Mauritania
	Mr. BAROODY	Saudi Arabia
	Mr. ANUMAN-RAJADHON	Thailand
	Mr. OSTROVSKY	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Mr. ATTLEE	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern
	Mr. MEANS	United States of America
	Mr. MARQUES SERE	Uruguay
Representatives of specialized agencies:		
	Mr. REYMOND	International Labour Organisation
	Mr. SALSAMENDI	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
	Dr. SACKS	World Health Organization
Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund:		
	Mr. GERIN	

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PRESENT (continued):

Representative of a non-governmental organization:

Category B and register:

	Mr. VASIL GERMENJI	International Federation of Free Journalists
Secretariat:	Mr. HUMPHREY	Director, Division of Human Rights
	Mr. OBHRAI	Office of Public Information
	Mr. CULPEPPER	Secretary of the Committee

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PLANS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (General Assembly resolution 1775 (XVII); ST/SG/AC.4/L.1-3) (continued)

Mr. RIFA'I (Jordan) said that it was his understanding that the Chairman intended to establish a sub-committee to study all the proposals by members of the Special Committee which already appeared in the Secretariat documents or which might be made subsequently. It would therefore be useful to determine immediately the criteria according to which the sub-committee was to accept or reject the various proposals before it. For instance, the sub-committee might only take up proposals relating to the celebration of the anniversary as such. He would like to know the Chairman's views on that subject.

The CHAIRMAN said she thought that one of the criteria which the sub-Committee should bear in mind was the cost of the various activities proposed. But it was difficult to give a definite reply before the sub-committee met.

Mr. RIFA'I (Jordan) felt that it would be as well to define the sub-committee's terms of reference before it met.

The CHAIRMAN agreed. In any event, the sub-committee could only take decisions pertaining to international activities, since national celebrations would obviously have to be left to the discretion of the Governments concerned.

Mr. ATTLEE (United Kingdom) shared the view expressed by the Greek representative at the previous meeting that the Information Centres should co-operate on that occasion with education ministries, universities and school systems in their areas, as was in any case proposed in document ST/SG/AC.4/L.2. Governments could assist the Information Centres with the translation and dissemination of the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly in the less widely-known languages. For its part, the United Kingdom Government was already lending assistance of that kind to the authorities of territories for which it was responsible.

Mr. OBHRAI (Office of Public Information) said that he wished to introduce document ST/SG/AC.4/L.2 and add some remarks about it. For obvious reasons, OPI felt that radio lent itself particularly well to such a celebration;

(Mr. Obhrai, OPI)

in certain areas, it was the only medium through which the great mass of the public could be reached. OPI intended to prepare a documentary script at Headquarters which would be distributed in about a hundred countries and territories - as had been done for the tenth anniversary of the Declaration - and to assist national radio services to prepare their own programmes for the occasion. It was a matter of encouraging them, giving them ideas and, above all, of supplying them with the necessary documentation (statements by prominent persons, records of meetings, etc.). On the day of the anniversary itself national radio services could devote part of their schedule to a reading of the full text of the Declaration; such a reading would take some twenty minutes, but if it was done by a prominent personality or famous speaker, it would bring the contents of the Declaration to the attention of a wide public.

The United Kingdom representative had made a useful proposal, for, while OPI would itself publish the text of the Declaration in some fifty languages, it would be unable for budgetary reasons to supply more than a limited quantity; it would therefore be a good thing if Governments were to publish further copies at their own expense, in the same or other languages. OPI would print the text as a pamphlet; Governments could disseminate it in the form of posters which would remain on permanent display in schools, universities and Government offices. OPI intended to mobilize the full extent of its resources, but any help from outside would be welcome.

Mr. SALSAMENDI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) thanked the Chairman for giving him the opportunity to tell the Committee about the plans of UNESCO, which spared no effort to spread knowledge of human rights in all Member States, especially through its series of studies on race and science, and articles published in the International Social Sciences Journal. There was no doubt that by using new techniques the Special Committee would succeed in giving the Declaration added importance as could be anticipated from documents ST/SG/AC.4/L.1, L.2 and L.3.

Every year, the United Nations and the specialized agencies celebrated the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For the fifteenth anniversary, round-table discussions could be organized wherever international organizations had their headquarters; prominent personalities could take part

(Mr. Salsamendi, UNESCO)

and comment on radio or television on the human rights within the purview of the particular specialized agency concerned. Thus, UNESCO could organize a round-table on the right to education (article 26 of the Declaration), freedom of information (article 19), or the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community (article 27). The UNESCO General Conference had just adopted a resolution requesting the UNESCO Secretariat to undertake a series of studies on that last item.

In that connexion, it might perhaps be useful if the United Nations Secretariat were to draft a report on progress achieved over the pass fifteen years in the field of human rights.

As to practical plans, UNESCO must obviously reserve its position regarding any project with possible financial implications. The UNESCO Departments of Education and of Mass Communication had each begun to draw up plans of action. The former was preparing documents on the right to education and on the teaching of human rights and international understanding; for the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary, it proposed to ask the 250 educational establishments in forty-three countries which were taking part in the UNESCO Associated Schools Project to organize special activities. The Department of Mass Communication would call upon the UNESCO national commissions and clubs, as well as non-governmental organizations, to organize ceremonies or study meetings devoted to human rights; it would print a series of photographs to be distributed in educational establishments, together with an explanatory pamphlet; that series would be widely disseminated, and UNESCO was currently engaged in talks with the various national commissions with a view to having the pamphlet published in as many languages as possible. UNESCO would also prepare a film strip, with a commentary in the four official languages. The "UNESCO Courrier" would issue a special number devoted to human rights; it was intended to publish the articles concerned separately so that they could be distributed for the fifteenth anniversary of the Declaration. Fifteen thousand copies would be printed, in the four official languages, of the poster which had won first prize in the international human rights competition organized by UNESCO the previous year. Lastly, the Department of Mass Communication would send out a circular to the heads of postal services in Member States proposing the issue of commemorative stamps.

(Mr. Salvagnoli, UNESCO)

He reminded the Committee that the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Declaration was on the provisional agenda of the next session of the Consultative Committee on Public Information, which would take place at United Nations Headquarters from 25 to 28 March 1963. He also emphasized the need to prepare all the documents in good time, so that they could be circulated before August 1963. He was at the Committee's disposal for any further explanations it might require.

Mr. RAYMOND (International Labour Organisation) recalled the ILO's specific responsibilities in the field of human rights. They related to freedom of association, more particularly as it concerned employers' and trade union organizations, the prevention of discrimination in employment, and the problems of forced labour. It was from the angle of its special responsibilities that the ILO could make an effective contribution to the celebration of the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It might, for instance, help to mobilize public opinion, as suggested by the representatives of the United Kingdom, Costa Rica and France, through employers' and trade union organizations. The ILO would also be glad to give prominence in its public information activities to the human rights problems within its purview. Lastly, it could participate in any commemorative ceremony to be organized in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations on 10 December 1963. The ILO would give most favourable consideration to any proposals that the Special Committee might put forward and would do its very best to implement them.

Dr. SACKS (World Health Organization) said that WHO was prepared to co-operate fully with the Special Committee and that its Division of Public Information would underline the importance of human rights problems. It was suggested in document ST/SG/AC.4/L.3 that the specialized agencies might organize observances at their headquarters. WHO would participate to the full in any observance that might be organized in Geneva. It would be easier to decide on the details of the proposed activities after the forthcoming meeting of the Consultative Committee on Public Information.

Mr. CERMENJI (International Federation of Free Journalists) welcomed the fact that the letter from his organization had been circulated He wished to emphasize the right to a family: owing to various circumstances, many families had been separated and scattered throughout the world. If the Committee could take up that question with a view to making it possible for those families to be reunited, that, together with the general amnesty that had been proposed, would make the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a brilliant occasion. It was also an excellent idea to use Telstar for that purpose.

Mr. ATTLEE (United Kingdom) asked whether the number of copies of the Universal Declaration to be printed in the different languages had been calculated on the basis of expected demand and available stocks. It seemed somewhat surprising that provision had been made for 5,000 copies in Welsh and only 3,000 in Russian.

Mr. OBHRAI (Office of Public Information) explained that the numbers of copies had been decided on the basis of reports from the information centre for each region. OPI need publish only a small number of copies in languages in which other organizations, governmental or non-governmental, could undertake a wider distribution; but it was obliged to print more copies itself in the languages for which other means of reproduction and distribution were lacking.

Mr. BARTON (Canada) suggested that in its report, the Committee should ask the United Nations, the specialized agencies and Governments to report on the steps they had taken or were intending to take with regard to the celebration. The Committee would thus have before it some very useful basic documentation.

Mr. LUQMAN (Mauritania) said that the United Kingdom representative had raised a highly pertinent question. However, it was less important to distribute a large number of documents than to inform the public effectively. There, radio, television and other audio-visual media might play an outstanding role; they would, in particular, have the advantage of being able to reach the illiterate. The programmes might be relayed by satellites such as Telstar. The proposed sub-committee should examine those possibilities.

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(Mr. Luqman, Mauritania)

With regard to the use of radio, the United Nations might ask all States to devote a fifteen-minute broadcast to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, without necessarily giving a reading of the entire text, since its length might cause programming difficulties, unless it was transmitted by private broadcasting stations. Document ST/SG/AC.4/L.3 contained many other suggestions which deserved the Special Committee's attention. The Committee might also be guided by the experience gained during the celebration of the Tenth Anniversary as indicated in paragraph 7 of that document.

Paragraph 8 of the same document raised the question of financial implications. That was a matter of paramount importance and the Committee could go no further without having considered it in all its aspects. Of course, the problem of financing concerned only the United Nations and the organizations directly related to it.

The Special Committee should distinguish between the measures which were essential if it was to attain its objectives and those which could be disregarded without disadvantage. Since organizations which were not directly related to the United Nations might use the celebration for purposes other than those envisaged in the Universal Declaration, the Special Committee should be very cautious in formulating its recommendations to the organs concerned.

So far as participation by Governments was concerned, the Special Committee should not do more than make general suggestions. It was not for the Committee to ask Governments to report on the steps they intended to take for the celebration. Each Government was free to decide what form its own participation would take.

The date of 10 December 1963 was a judicious choice. That was a time of year when the eyes of the whole world were focused on the proceedings of the General Assembly.

Lastly, he said that, to ensure the success of the celebration, a special effort must be made to reach the peoples of distant countries, those whose information media were inadequate and those who were still beneath the colonial yoke. He might speak again later in the debate.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUB-COMMITTEE

Mr. BOUQUIN (France), replying to a question from the Chair, formally proposed that a sub-committee should be established and that its membership and terms of reference should be left to the Chairman to decide. As the Chairman had suggested, it might be a small working group which would carry on the task begun by the Committee's officers with the help of the Secretariat. The sub-committee, of which the committee's officers would be members, might consist of eight or nine representatives. It would report to the Special Committee at a subsequent meeting.

It was so decided.

Mr. RIFA'I (Jordan) proposed that in order to save time, the Chairman should designate immediately the countries which were to be members of the Sub-Committee.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Sub-Committee should be composed of the following members: Argentina, France, Greece, Jordan, Mauritania, Thailand, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.